

## NATIONAL THREAT LANDSCAPE STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

*This assessment is intended to provide situational awareness of threats with potential national-level implications related to public order, public safety and the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. The information in this assessment is based on reporting from RCMP Divisions, law enforcement partners, searches conducted against RCMP holdings, and open source resources (current as of 27 January, 2022). The IMCIT continues to maintain visibility on emerging threats and will provide updates on a periodic or as required basis.*

### KEY POINTS

- Opposition to vaccine mandates continues to grow in intensity and could become a potential flash point for acts of violence. A national convoy in opposition of vaccine mandates, expected to converge in Ottawa between 28-29 January 2022, may attract ideologically motivated individuals. Protests outside the homes of public officials are also likely to continue.
- Although the momentum of responses to the call out for environmental solidarity actions has slowed, planned and impromptu solidarity actions in the form of public order events and traffic disruptions are likely to continue.
- Although demonstrations against public health orders continue, there are no known incidents significantly affecting the vaccine rollout arising from protests during this reporting period.

### THREATS TO PUBLIC SAFETY

#### **COASTAL GASLINK PIPELINE (CGL) OPPOSITION – MORICE RIVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA**

*Potential for continued criminality and solidarity actions which could impact public or officer safety.*

Coastal Gaslink (CGL) has resumed construction of the pipeline at the Morice River<sup>1</sup> following a two-week occupation at Coyote Camp by Wet'suwet'en supporters which occurred in December 2021.<sup>2</sup> Protesters retreated from the camp in early January to avoid arrest amid rumours circulating online that the RCMP were planning enforcement action.<sup>3</sup> Photos posted to social media claim to show RCMP vehicles parked at a hotel in nearby Houston BC, inferring that enforcement action was likely.<sup>4</sup> Online comments in relation to these photos reference vandalism, with suggestions to "torch" or use bleach to damage these vehicles.<sup>5</sup> There are currently no reports of such adverse incidents taking place at this time.

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Solidarity actions in opposition of the CGL pipeline occurred throughout this reporting period, however, which includes the following:

- On 25 December 2021, two railroads were sabotaged in Montreal, QC.<sup>6</sup>
- On 30 December 2021, windows at the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) headquarters in Montreal, QC were smashed.<sup>7</sup>
- In early January 2022, stickers and posters containing anti-RCMP rhetoric were posted in Victoria and Vancouver, BC.<sup>8</sup>
- On 2 January 2022, a RBC branch in Ottawa, ON was vandalized with paint.<sup>9</sup>
- On 10 January 2022, a man was arrested in Orillia, ON after chaining himself to the entrance of a RBC branch in protest.<sup>10</sup>
- On 15 January 2022, protesters held a “die-in” demonstration outside a RBC branch in Winnipeg, MB.<sup>11</sup>
- On 24 January 2022, protesters set up “construction site” displays outside the personal residences of a TC Energy Board Chair and a RBC executive in Toronto, ON.<sup>12</sup>
- On 25 January 2022, anti-RBC stickers were pasted to RBC branches and automatic teller machines in Toronto, ON.<sup>13</sup>

Overall sentiment towards police, specifically the RCMP, within online rhetoric in this space remains negative among networks that oppose the CGL pipeline.

The IMCIT assesses that, while the momentum of protests across Canada has currently slowed, these events continue to occur sporadically. Individuals with shared grievances across Canada have the ability to mobilize quickly in response to calls for solidarity actions, which may occur with little warning. Calls for action and potential disruptions to critical infrastructure are expected to continue in response to CGL construction activities.

#### **OLD-GROWTH LOGGING - SOUTHWEST VANCOUVER ISLAND, BRITISH COLUMBIA (BC)**

*Potential for criminality and potential for Canada-wide actions which could impact public or officer safety.*

The temporary injunction that prohibits the obstruction, impediment, or interference with logging at the Teal-Jones Group site in Vancouver Island, BC remains in place.<sup>14</sup> A total of 1188 individuals have been arrested at the Fairy Creek protest site since May of 2021.<sup>15</sup> News reporting indicates that the RCMP’s enforcement of the injunction cost over \$10 million in 2021, a figure obtained through an *Access to Information Act* request.<sup>16</sup> Social media associated to the ongoing issues at Fairy Creek indicate a perception that this amount of money is wasteful and has been put towards arresting peaceful citizens.<sup>17</sup>

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The search for a Fairy Creek protester who has been missing since November 2021 continues as protesters allege that the RCMP are not adequately assisting with search and rescue efforts. Furthermore, tensions between protesters and logging industry workers may rise amid allegations from protesters that they had received threats from loggers and were denied entry to search the logging grounds.<sup>18</sup>

As the number of protesters present at Fairy Creek dwindle during the winter months, environmental groups have advocated for traffic disruption numerous times per week to raise awareness of old-growth logging issues to the public, media and the government.<sup>19</sup>

During this reporting period, the following incidents occurred in solidarity with old-growth logging protesters:

- On 10 January 2022, several traffic blockades were held in BC. Seven protesters were arrested in Victoria, three were arrested in Burnaby, and two were arrested in Nanaimo.<sup>20</sup>
- On 19 January 2022, five protesters were arrested for blocking traffic in Victoria, BC.<sup>21</sup>
- On 24 January 2022, six protesters were arrested for blocking traffic in Victoria, BC.<sup>22</sup>
- On 26 January 2022, protesters from the “Save Old Growth” group blocked Highway 1 leading towards the Horseshoe Bay ferry terminal in West Vancouver BC, including one protester who superglued their hands to the surface of the highway. One protester was taken into police custody.<sup>23</sup>

The IMCIT assesses that protesters plan to remain in the Fairy Creek area and that any law enforcement arrests will be perceived negatively and could spark sporadic solidarity actions across the country. Traffic disruption solidarity actions are also likely to continue.

#### **CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES - NATIONAL MOBILIZATION**

*Potential for Canada-wide actions which could impact public or officer safety.*

Discussions and actions by environmental groups continue to overlap with narratives related to Wet’suwet’en solidarity and the perceived inaction by the federal government to combat climate change. Public order events related to climate issues are expected to continue sporadically or in conjunction with ongoing opposition towards pipeline construction and old-growth logging.

A “Day of Action for a Just Transition”<sup>a</sup> is being promoted for 12 March 2022 with actions planned throughout Canada.<sup>24</sup> It is likely this day of action will include peaceful public order events organized by climate action groups and may include locations such as constituency offices. No adverse information associated with this day of action has been currently identified.

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<sup>a</sup> *The Just Transition Act* relates to socioeconomic impacts of Canada’s climate policies and its commitment to, “support the future and livelihood of workers and their communities in the transition to a low-carbon global economy.”  
<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/roadmap>

## ANTI-PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS

*Potential for public health restriction violations. Potential for protests that could impact public or officer safety.*

The IMCIT assesses that opposition to vaccine mandates continues to grow in intensity and could become a potential flash point for acts of violence. The following are two major issues being tracked at this time.

### Protests Targeting Public Officials and Health Officers

The IMCIT assesses that new COVID-19 public health measures and the prolonging of existing restrictions have led to increasingly violent rhetoric appearing online within anti-public health order narratives. The IMCIT has observed an escalation in threatening rhetoric against public officials, including references to “Nuremberg Trials 2.0”<sup>b</sup> and advocating for civilian arrests of those perceived to be involved in imposing public health rules.<sup>25</sup> The following demonstrations have also occurred outside the residences of public officials during this reporting period:

- 1 January 2022: Provincial Health Minister, Jason COPPING (Calgary, AB)<sup>26</sup>
- 6 January 2022: Provincial Premier, Blaine HIGGS (Quispamsis, NB)<sup>27</sup>
- 8 January 2022: Municipal Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Mustafa HIRJI (Niagara, ON)<sup>28</sup>
- 8 January 2022: Niagara Health CEO, Lynn GUERRIERO (Niagara, ON)<sup>29</sup>
- 9 January 2022: Municipal Mayor, Jyoti GONDEK (Calgary, AB)<sup>30</sup>
- 10 January 2022: Provincial Education Minister, Stephen LECCE (Vaughan, ON)<sup>31</sup>
- 12 January 2022: Municipal Councilor, Gian-Carlo CARRA (Calgary, AB)<sup>32</sup>
- 15 and 19 January 2022: Municipal Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Thomas PIGGOTT (Peterborough ON)<sup>33</sup>
- 20 January 2022: Leader of Ontario Liberal Party, Steven DEL DUCA (Woodbridge, ON)<sup>34</sup>
- 23 January 2022: Member of Parliament, George CHAHAL (Calgary, AB)<sup>35</sup>

The IMCIT assesses that demonstrations of this nature are likely to continue as public health restrictions remain in place.

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<sup>b</sup> The Nuremberg Trials reference is in relation to a set of research ethics developed after German doctors conducted unethical human experimentation during the Second World War. It has been used by COVID-19 vaccine opponents throughout the pandemic to argue that vaccines violate the Nuremberg Code. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/no-covid-19-vaccines-do-not-violate-the-nuremberg-code-1.5576156>



### “Freedom” Demonstrations and Convoys

The nationwide “Freedom Convoy 2022” to oppose vaccine mandates for trucking industry workers is enroute to Ottawa by various east, west, and south-bound routes throughout Canada. Support for the convoy was evident during the sixth “World Wide Demonstrations for Freedom” held on 22 January 2022.

The “Demonstrations for Freedom” were held to oppose public health orders and consisted of large rallies across Canada amassing several hundred to upwards of a thousand attendees. Rallies were reported in Kelowna<sup>36</sup> and Vancouver BC<sup>37</sup>, Waterloo<sup>38</sup> and Toronto ON<sup>39</sup>, and Fredericton<sup>40</sup> and Moncton NB.<sup>41</sup> Two protesters were arrested in Fredericton following an argument between protesters and police officers.<sup>42</sup> Signs observed at rallies across the country contained messages of support for the “Freedom Convoy”.

The “Freedom Convoy” is planned to converge in Ottawa between 28-29 January 2022,<sup>43</sup> which is expected to attract ideologically motivated individuals with grievances that are anti-government, anti-authority and conspiratorial in nature. Traffic delays throughout Canada have already occurred as a result of the convoy<sup>44</sup>, and disruptions within the National Capital Region are expected as convoys arrive. The IMCIT assesses that impromptu protests may occur in Ottawa once the convoy converges, and it is possible protected sites such as the Prime Minister’s residence, as well as businesses such as media outlets, may be attractive locations for protest. Additionally, impromptu protests outside legislative buildings and other symbolic locations, including border crossings, are expected to occur throughout Canada on 29 January 2022 in solidarity with the protesters in Ottawa.

For more information on the “Freedom Convoy 2022”, refer to FPNI IMCIT STA 2022-02.

The IMCIT assesses that anti-public health order narratives and protests will persist as the pandemic continues to impact daily life.

### **THREATS TO THE COVID-19 VACCINE ROLLOUT**

*Potential for criminality or threats to public order or officer safety.*

The IMCIT has not identified any confirmed or coordinated threats targeting the vaccine rollout or the vaccine supply chain during this reporting period. Although demonstrations against public health orders continue, there are no known incidents significantly affecting the vaccine rollout arising from these protests during this reporting period.

There have been some developments, however, regarding followers of a self-proclaimed “Head of State and Commander in Chief of Canada”, inspired by QAnon ideologies, who has alleged that a verdict from an “International Common Law Court of Justice” allows Canadians to conduct citizen arrests of those perceived to be responsible for the vaccine rollout and related public health orders. Although the documents, currently circulating on social media, are not from a legitimate court of law and do not hold any legal authority<sup>45</sup>, lone-inspired individuals may perceive them to be legitimate and attempt to accost or apprehend individuals who are named in the document as being under an international arrest warrant. Individuals named in these documents include the Prime Minister, chief medical officers, and

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pharmaceutical employees. At this time, there is one known instance of an individual approaching police officers in Peterborough ON to discuss conducting citizen arrests with reference to a mass “cease and desist” campaign against individuals and organizations perceived as committing crimes against humanity for imposing COVID-related rules.<sup>46</sup>

With respect to fraudulent vaccine certifications, schemes possibly involving internal employees<sup>47</sup> and the exploitation of vulnerable persons<sup>48</sup> are under investigation, but these are unlikely to affect the rollout of the legitimate vaccine supply.

## **ANTI-PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS - GLOBAL TRENDS**

Protests outside of Canada against public health measures have also escalated into violent confrontations, including the physical harassment of a Parliamentarian for French territory Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon<sup>49</sup>, a blockade of a hospital in Guadeloupe leading to the arrests of four people for violence against police<sup>50</sup>, and the attempted storming of the Bulgarian Parliament amid clashes with police.<sup>51</sup> Police officers have reported sustaining injuries while responding to weekly protests against public health restrictions in Belgium<sup>52</sup> and France.<sup>53</sup>

There is continued concern globally that ideological movements opposing public health measures are functioning as “conveyor belts” leading to increased exposure to violent extremist ideologies. Five Eyes nations have assessed emerging risks from anti-vaccine motivated radicalized lone actors<sup>54</sup> and militia-style movements.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, racially- and ethnically-motivated extremist groups, including the Proud Boys and Neo-Nazi movements, are actively attempting to recruit disaffected individuals from anti-public health movements.<sup>56</sup>

Furthermore, there are increasing overlaps between QAnon, anti-vaccine, and “sovereign citizen” ideologies.<sup>57</sup> Sovereign citizens occupying an anti-vaccine protest camp outside the Old Parliament House in Canberra, Australia were responsible for a fire on the property, leading to arson charges against protesters.<sup>58</sup> British sovereign citizens have been obstructing vaccination clinics with protests, threats, serving illegitimate pseudo-legal notices, and are holding training camps coaching members to engage in “direct action” including breaking through police lines, marching, and sparring.<sup>59</sup>

The IMCIT continues to maintain visibility on emerging threat issues and will provide updates as required.

*Issued by: Ideologically Motivated Criminal Intelligence Team (IMCIT)*

*Approved by: Director, Directorate of Strategic Intelligence, Federal Policing National Intelligence*

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